

Glorifying the Lord in our lives

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Let us turn to **John 7: 37-39**.

John 7: 37-39

- 37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying,
"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."
38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"
39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

We see in the context that the Lord Jesus explains to us that the Holy Spirit would come, God would give His Holy Spirit to His people in a manner different from previously.

And the explanation here is that: the Spirit was not yet, or not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified. So this refers to the event of Pentecost. It is a historical event; it took place at a certain point in time. The event was associated with the Lord Jesus being glorified. And we saw that when the Lord Jesus overcame sin, He died for us, He rose from the dead, He ascended to Heaven; it was then that He poured forth the Holy Spirit. So the Lord Jesus was glorified and the Holy Spirit was poured forth.

But then we have also seen that the Holy Spirit was given for the purpose of glorifying Christ. So while Christ has already been glorified because of what He has done, now the Holy Spirit has come to work in the lives of His disciples, so that we will glorify Him.

This is something which all Christians should long for, and in varying degrees and ways we do desire that our lives may glorify the Lord Jesus. Also, we are quite conscious that in order to live for God, we need the Holy Spirit and we very much want to experience more of the life, the power, of the Holy Spirit so that we can honour God, live for Him.

But there is an underlying principle we need to pay some attention to, and that is: How much we receive of the Holy Spirit may bear a significant relationship with the degree of our wanting to glorify the Lord Jesus in our lives.

We may long to know more of the power of the Holy Spirit, His presence with us, His working in us. But if in our hearts there is not that intense longing to honour the Lord Jesus, glorify Him, bring joy to Him – if this is not deep enough in us – then the Holy Spirit may not find it meaningful to come in His abundance, in His presence, in His power.

So let us consider what it means to glorify the Lord in our lives. What do we need to do? How does it work? How does it manifest?

Matthew 5: 16

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven..."

These are the words of the Lord Jesus and the primary issue here is: **Let your light shine before men.** If you let your light shine before men in the right way, then people will **see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**

He said: "Let your light shine before men in such a way..." – that means there is a manner in which our light can shine so that men, when they see our good works, they will glorify our Father who is in heaven. This is not always true if we do not abide by the manner in which we ought to shine our light.

If our lives are lived in such a way that we are preoccupied with ourselves and we think that we want our light to shine forth so that men may see our good works, we may find that it does not bring glory to God: God is not glorified because when men look at us and our good works, they are focusing on us and our works; and they may praise us and regard us as having achieved very much in this world and we on our part will be very happy because we consider that we are effective.

But what the Lord Jesus wants to tell us is that we must let our light shine in such a way so that when men see our good works, they are directed towards God – their attention is drawn towards God, what God is doing.

And at the heart of what God is doing we know is something truly good and meaningful which will help people in the right direction.

So then we may ask: How do we let our light shine? Where does the light come from? How do we produce light in order to shine?

This light is meant to help people to come to God, to appreciate what is good. The light is meant to bring to people's understanding, consciousness, what is the right way to live and how to respond to God and to live a life that is meaningful.

John 1: 4

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

This is a reference to the Lord Jesus and we are told that the Light of men, that is the Lord Jesus Himself – He is the Light of the world, He is the light that shines in the darkness – this light comes from His life. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

We cannot just produce light in order to bring people to God by our own cleverness, by hard work, by trying to persuade people with all that we know and learn.

The primary aspect by which the light must shine forth must come from life. In Him was life: eternal life, the life of God, the morally perfect life that has meaning, purpose and direction. It was as He lived out His life that the light would shine. The light shines when the life is expressed, when the life is lived out in the way that it ought to do so.

So as we look at the life of the Lord Jesus, as we see how He came into this world, how He conducted Himself, how He responded to situations... if our hearts are open to behold what is truly good, we will see the light, we will behold His glory: full of grace and truth.

So if we want to glorify the Lord in our lives then we must pay attention to the quality of life in us rather than many things that we may want to do or experience. Many things that we do or experience can be very helpful, but only if there is that life to express it. If we do not have that life then whatever we express will be without life and it can also bring death because the evil one can do many things that are very similar to what God is doing. We see that in the example of Moses contending with the magicians of Pharaoh: They could do various things that appeared very similar to what Moses was doing on behalf of God.

But there is one thing that Satan can never do: and that is manifest life. In him is death. There is no life in him, but it may appear like life.

He can come like an angel of light; it can seem to be light shining but it is artificial light, it is not the true light that has come into this world that brings life to us.

So then how is this life manifested? If we are to let our light shine in the world then there must be a context in which this light should shine. When do we shine this light? Are there special occasions? Are there situations that are suitable for us but some other situations are not?

If we understand that light comes from life, then there should be no situation when the light does not shine. The light will always shine if we live our lives the way we ought to do.

1 Corinthians 10: 31

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that this is a very important principle to remember and to put into practice. He was very distressed with the way that the Corinthian Christians were living their lives. In many ways what they did was dishonouring to God, displeasing to God, not helpful to other people.

And so he told them: "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

This tells us that doing all to the glory of God is a principle that is meant to be applied at all times, in all situations.

In the context of **1 Corinthians 10**, the apostle Paul was referring to eating meat which an unbeliever tells the believer that it is offered or sacrificed to idols. So should the believer eat or not? He said, "If an unbeliever invites you, if you want to go, you go and you eat without asking questions. But if the unbeliever tells you, 'This is meat offered to idols,' don't eat it." Why?

He said: "...do not eat *it* for the sake of the one who informed *you* and for conscience' sake." But why for conscience' sake – is it for your own conscience? He said: "No: for the conscience of the one who informed you."

So the underlying principle here is that when the unbeliever offers the meat to idols, it has nothing to do with you.

You give thanks to God if it is something that you appreciate that God has provided, you can partake of it but you are not to participate in the whole act of worship, as for example, doing it together in that kind of context or being involved in that kind of context. But when it is just meat, it is all right to eat.

But if the unbeliever tells you, 'It is meat sacrificed to idols,' do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who informed *you* and for conscience' sake. What does that mean?

Basically, as I see in the context, the apostle Paul is saying that if you do eat it, it may harm your friend because to him this is meat sacrificed to idols, you as a Christian should not be eating it; it will contaminate you, it will affect you. So, in that kind of context, with his lack of understanding, then when you participate in that way it can affect him negatively; his conscience can be affected. Or, it can affect him in the sense that if he were to become a Christian, he may also think it is all right to be involved in terms of meat offered to idols and to participate in the whole act of worship.

Whatever it is, the underlying principle is: the apostle Paul is saying that you should be concerned for the well-being of the party that you are relating with.

Our light shining in this world has very much to do with the spirit with which we live our lives.

Are we preoccupied with ourselves in the sense that “I have the freedom to do whatever I wish; it does not matter how it affects other people so long as I live my life, I am doing the right thing”?

It sounds right and in some situations, we should live that way. But there are various situations where we should take into consideration how our lives can affect other people and if it is not necessary for us to live that way, then we give due weight to that.

So eating or drinking to the glory of God can be manifested in different situations and in different contexts the meaning can be different.

Some of us may think of eating to the glory of God as eating in a manner in which we are thankful to God; eating in a manner in which we are disciplined; we do not just eat to indulge in pleasures. There are many aspects we can think of where we can eat to the glory of God.

But in this context he is talking about the relationship with an unbeliever.

There is another context where the apostle referred to the Corinthians, in **1 Corinthians 11**, where he talked about their coming together to eat the Lord's Supper.

He said: “...you come together not for the better but for the worse.” Why? Because when they came together, he said, “...it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. You are preoccupied with yourselves. One is hungry; another is drunk.” He said, “Do you not have houses to eat and drink? Do you come together and you shame those who have nothing?”

So they were eating and drinking before the Lord's Supper in a manner which affected other people negatively. And so those who were poor would be humiliated. And so the apostle Paul told them: "When you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment."

So here again we see the underlying principle is to be concerned for the well-being of others. If we want our light to shine in this world then the spirit of love and compassion, of kindness, of considerateness, must come forth in the way we live our lives.

So he said, "When we come together to partake of the Lord's Supper, we must be conscious of one another. We are doing together to honour the Lord, appreciate Him - not each one of us preoccupied with ourselves, what we want to do, what we like to do."

But more than that, he says: "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Many of us may not be very conscious that the way we live our lives each moment has a message that comes through to the people around us all the time.

We may be preoccupied with doing our own things, with doing the things that we think we ought to do; but what is the spirit that comes through, what kind of life is manifested, what kind of life is shining?

If we want our light to shine in such a way that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven then we need to take care of the kind of spirit with which we live our lives.

Underlying it, the basic issue is: Are we preoccupied with ourselves, what we like to do, what we want people to think of in terms of our lives?

Or are we preoccupied with what is in the heart of God, what is important to him, what has eternal value? Are we concerned for the true well-being of others? Will our lives contribute in that direction?

Many of us may not be very conscious of this because we think that only when we are speaking of spiritual things then we are affecting people spiritually.

But that is not true. We see in the Scriptures very clearly that the way we live each moment will have a message that is being communicated.

A person can share the gospel in a spirit of self-confidence. Just as the apostle Paul said, he had confidence in the flesh. So when we do that, what will we be transmitting? We can transmit a spirit of self-confidence, the flesh, and as a result, when people respond, they may do likewise.

But if we share the gospel in a spirit of dependence on God, love for Him, submission to His will and this spirit comes through, then when people respond to that, they will also learn to worship God, to respond to Him.

So too the way we conduct ourselves at home, with friends, in the work situation, in society; each moment of our lives we are shining, whether with the true light or otherwise.

So if we want to know more of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives then it is essential that we learn to glorify the Lord Jesus; that this consumes us, that this is what we want in our lives, we long for it, we work towards that and that is what matters to us. And glorifying the Lord Jesus in our lives at the heart of it has this aspect of true love for others.

Why did the Lord Jesus come into this world? It was to save us because He loved us. So too when we truly love others, care for their well-being and manifest that kind of compassion, kindness, then the light of God will shine.

But let us not think that love for others is always gentle and soft and non-offensive. The Lord Jesus was very tender towards those who failed but who wanted to repent and change but the Lord Jesus was very fierce towards the Pharisees who exploited other people; who were pretenders; who were not truly loving God.

So it is important for us to understand that ultimately, our basis is what is truly good before God. Love is not soft or sentimental. Love has to be on the basis of God's righteousness and His goodness.

So then, as we seek to appreciate what the Lord Jesus has done for us on the cross, let us ponder over the spirit with which He came into this world.

Are our lives what we ought to be? Are we living our lives in a manner that is similar to that of the Lord Jesus so that others can benefit?

Let us ask the Lord to help us to ponder over our lives such that if there are aspects that hinder His working, that we will take corrective steps.

If our lives are a blessing to others, let us deepen that and ask the Lord to help us to grow deeper and more effective in that direction. Let us ask Him to teach us so that our lives may be of quality, that the light may shine forth similar to the Lord Jesus, the light of the world. And He tells us: "You are the light of the world." Let us be true to our calling.